

A N
A N S W E R
 T O T H E
Q U E R Y of a **D E I S T**,
Concerning the Necessity of Faith.

S I R,

IN the Discourse we had when last we met, you demanded of me, Whether it was not a shocking Sentence, and hardly consistent with the Justice and Clemency of God, to affirm, That a Person born and bred in a Pagan Country, where Christianity is either not at all known, or at least so represented, as to render it incredible and absurd; yet this Person living up to the dictates of a good Conscience in Morality, that is, To the Prescript of the Law of Nature, in regard to God, and his Neighbour, to the best of his knowledg; Or in case of frailty and failure, becoming Repentant of his fault, should nevertheless be Damn'd for want of a Belief, (tho' contrary to his Reason) of the Articles and Mysteries of the Christian Faith? And what you thus said of an Unbeliever, you proportionably (and with Truth) adapted to an erroneous Believer.

To this (as I may term it) Antichristian Query, I, as a Christian, return by way of Answer, this opposite Assertion (*viz.*) *Salvation, as it imports either Remission of Sin, or Fruition of God, is not due to Man, nor attainable by him, otherwise than by a right Faith in one Mediator between God and Man Christ Jesus. And therefore there actually is such a Mediator, and such a Faith.* This general Assertion contains several distinct Parts, or Positions, each of which I shall endeavour briefly to explain, and render rational to an impartial Reader.

My first Position is, That *Remission of Sin, and Justification of a Sinner, tho' Repentant, is not, by Vertue of such Repentance alone, due to the Sinner, nor attainable by him*: To evince the Truth of this Position: I lay down this Principle engrafted in Man's Natural Reason: (*viz.*) That an Injury, or Injustice done to another, requires a condign satisfaction, or reparation to be made to the Party injur'd, before the Party injureing can justly challenge a Remission, or quitting of Scores for the injury done; and herein, the greater the injury, the greater still is the satisfaction due: Nor is it to the purpose, That the Party injur'd is not in necessity, or want of satisfaction equivalent to the damage sustain'd by the injurie, for satisfaction obligatory ariseth not from want or indigency in the Party injur'd, but from the just Propriety and Right he retains to what is his own. Neither is it material in the strictness and exigency of Justice, That the party injureing repents him of the injury done; for Repentance is no recompence to the damnify'd person, and therefore notwithstanding such Repentance, the obligation of satisfaction, or indemnification remains due to the party injur'd. I also lay down this other Principle: acknowledged by all, That an injury, or injustice, being an usurpation of another's good and right, takes its species and degree of Malignity from the worth and value of the good and right usurp'd; and when the worth is Infinite, the injustice is so too. Now Sin, as it includes a disobedience and repugnance to the known Will and Law of God an Infinite good, carries along with it an infinite degree of Injustice, and on its part despoils the Almighty of his Sovereignty and Right of being the first Original on which all things depend, and last end to which all things ought to be referr'd: For which infinite Injustice done to God by Sin, Man a finite and limited thing can make no condign satisfaction. From these undeniable Principles, is necessarily concluded my first Position. (*viz.*) That *Remission of Sin, and Justification of a Sinner, tho' Repentant, is not by Vertue of such Repentance alone due to the Sinner, nor attainable by him.*

My second Position is, The Fruition of God in regard to Man, tho' of himself innocent, and free from Sin, is not by force or efficacy of such innocence due to Man. Before I undertake to prove this Position, it is fitting I first advertise; your Query, as to this part of it, is bottomed on a false supposition (*viz.*) That there is extant a Person arriv'd to the use and maturity of Reason, wholly ignorant, or mislead in the Principles of Christianity; yet without any malignity of Will, spotless and inculpable in the observance of the Law of Nature; for in reallity there is no such Person. To make out this, I need only to appeal to the experience of your self, and all Mankind, whether it be not true, That there is in Man's Nature, from his very Conception and Birth, propagated in him, and inherent to him,

him, a strong Propension to Vice and Wickedness; and as strong an Aversion from Vertue and Goodness, which Corruption of human Nature is termed original Concupiscence, and Injustice. And tho' this depravation doth not discover it self in Infants, by reason of the Organs of the Body, on which the use and exercise of the rational Faculties of the Soul depend, are not qualify'd and dispos'd in Infants for such exercises. Yet so soon as these Impediments in the Organs are removed, and Man by degrees arrives to the use and liberty of his Will and Reason in discerning Good and Evil, we manifestly and daily see, infected and vitiated Nature, hurried by the corrupt Inclinations radicated in it, without any new addition or change made in the Soul it self, or its inclinations, willfully, and not by force or compulsion, breaks forth like an Ulcer into all Abominations, and when let loose and comply'd with vents it self in Murders Rapines Brutalities, &c. Overturns the Laws of God and Nature, and unhindges the whole frame of human Life and Conversation. Can this Malignity of Will, this rooted Concupiscence and Injustice, be otherwise than odious to God, the Just, the Good, the Perfect? Is it not reasonable, That as vitiated Man is averse from Righteousness, so the Righteous God should be averse from him? Is this then that spotless Innocence, and Integrity suppos'd in the Person represented in the Query, such as may challenge the Fruition of God in Glory? Surely no. But waving this groundless and delusive Supposition, I still assert; The Fruition of God in Glory, in regard to Man even of himself innocent and free from Sin, is not by Force or Efficacy of such Innocence, due to Man, nor attainable by him; to evince this Truth, I form this Argument; Nothing is due to nothing, or attainable by nothing; For from nothing comes nothing; And Worth or Merit is proportioned to Being. But Man is of himself nothing. Seeing all he is, all he has, and all he does, or can do, is by the free Gift and Participation of God his Creator, on the Influence of whose mere Bounty his whole Existence entirely depends. Consequently tho' Man should have, and retain the pretended Innocence and Integrity wherein he was Created, and should fully discharge his Duty in observance of the Law of Nature imprinted in him, nevertheless, God the whole and sole Owner both of Man and his Operations, may if he so please, without any Resemblance of Injustice, terminate his Bounty; And either annihilate Man by subtracting from him a further influence of Being, and so reducing him to what he was at first, Nothing; or continue him, as without Guilt, so without Punishment in the same State wherein he Created him, without any new addition of Perfection or Happiness; For an Enteity or Being by mere Bounty

and Participation, such implies (as I may term it,) a nullity of Self-Right to any farther Augmentation. Furthermore, God is an infinite and unlimited good, and the fruition of him in Glory is of infinite and unlimited value, but it involves a contradiction, that a finite and limited thing, as Man and his Operations are, should by any proper worth or merit, purchase or claim as due an infinite and unlimited good, as the fruition of God is; for a finite merit, and an infinite reward bear no proportion. It follows then, the fruition of God in Glory is not due to Man by force or vertue of any whatsoever self Innocence or merit in him. If it be objected, Man's Soul is naturally Immortal, and its rational Faculties, (*viz.*) Understanding and Will tend to the Fruition of God as their immortal specifick object and end. The Understanding tends to God as the Origin of Truth: The Will tends to God, as the Origin of Goodness; there seems then due to the Immortality of Man's Soul the fruition of God, the Immortal Fountain of truth and goodness, due not by merit, but by the prescript of Nature, and right of Creation. It is Answer'd, Man's Soul is said to be naturally immortal in this Sense; that abstracting from the Body, it has not intrinsick to it any Principles of corruption, that is, any material humours or qualities repugnant and destructive to each other, and thereby producing Mortality; but it is not immortal in such a construction, as if it had of it self, and from its own nature some stability or immortality of existence independent on the Will and influence of its Creator, on account of which alone Man might claim as his due, the fruition of God by any right deriv'd from his Nature; such an immortality the Soul of Man has not; his very being a Creature excludes him from it; and there is nothing more con-natural to a Being by Participation, than a Non-self-right to any thing. If it be ask'd, Why did God Create Man; yet render his end and happiness neither due to him, nor attainable by him? It is Answer'd, Tho' the end and happiness of Man being the fruition of God, an infinite good be neither due to Man, nor attainable by any self merit innocence or industry in Man: Nevertheless, this end and happiness of Man is attainable by ways and means agreeable to the Wisdom of God, and commensurate to his end.

Wherefore my third Position is, Salvation as it imports Remission of Sin, and fruition of God, is not absolutely unattainable by Man. To prove this, I Argue; There is nothing whereby to render the benefit of Man's Salvation unattainable, but either some limit or deficiency of power and goodness on God's part in conferring this benefit, or want of capacity on Man's part in receiving the benefit; not the first, seeing all the Attributes of God are, as his Essence, of infinite Perfection, and accordingly his power

power and goodness unlimited and indifcient ; Nor the second ; feing Man is fufceptable of any grace or favour whatfoever may conduce to the well Beeing of his Nature. Therefore Man's Salvation is not absolutely unattainable.

My fourth Pofition is ; It is moft expedient, that remiffion of Sin, and fruition of God fhould be attainable by the interpoftion of one Mediator between God, and Man Jesus Chrift, true God and Man. To explain and render rational this Pofition ; Note, It is Man did, and doth commit Sin, and it is Man ftands liable to fatisfaction for the injury done to God by Sin ; (as hath been fhewn in the firft Pofition) And becaufe the injury done to God an infinite good, by Sin, is infinite, the fatisfaction ought alfo to be fo ; but Man, a Creature, can make no fuch fatisfaction, (as hath been likewife fhewn in the fame Pofition.) That therefore there might be one who was Man, and could make an infinite fatisfaction for the Sin of Man, it was expedient, God fhould become Man, and thus be a fit Mediator between God and Man. Again, It is acknowledg'd, the end and happinefs of Man is the Fruition of God, an infinite God (as is intimated in the Objection to the fecond Pofition) It is likewife acknowledg'd, no Merits, Innocence, or Induftry in Man can fuffice, as means to attain to this end (as is alfo intimated in the fame Pofition.) That therefore Man might not be deftitute, and frufterated of the end and happinefs for which he was Created ; It was expedient the Divine Wifdom and Goodnefs fhould provide means whereby Man might attain to his end, means commenfurate, and proportioned to the end ; thefe means are the infinite merits of Chrift Jesus our Mediator, God and Man. Notwithftanding all which, I do not fay, That becaufe neither Remiffion of Sin, nor Fruition of God is due to Man, or attainable, either Remiffion by fole Repentance in a Sinner, or Fruition by proper merit in an Innocent ; therefore it was of abfolute neceffity to the Salvation of Man, God fhould become Man, and thereby mediate between God and Man ; for God as Supreme Lord, unaccountable to any for the difpenfations of his bounty, or determinations of his Will, might, if he had fo pleafed, *Gratis*, without regard to any purchafe or merit, both have remitted the Sin of Man, and beftow'd the Fruition of himfelf upon Man, as an effect of his fole Benignity and Goodnefs : But, I fay, it was moft expedient and congruous to the manifeftation of the plenitude both of God's Mercy and Juftice, that the Remiffion of Sin, and the Fruition of God, two infinite Benefits, fhould be conferr'd on Man by the infinite merits of Chrift Jesus our Mediator.

Now my fifth Pofition is, There is *de facto* a Mediator between God and Man, Chrift Jesus, who being God, became Man,
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Dy'd upon the Cross, &c. And thereby Merited and Purchas'd for Man a Right and Title to the Remission of Sin, and Fruition of God. I shall prove this important, Position, by such Rational Evidences and Motives of Credibility, as may be convincing to an impartial Understanding. The first Evidence or Motive, is taken from the Plenitude of the Mercy and Justice of God, (so often inculcated and now repeated.) Man by Sin had committed an infinite Injury, and by that Injury was obnoxious to infinite Misery: This Misery rendered him the Object of no less then an infinite Compassion and Mercy, the sole Property of God an infinite Good, This infinite Compassion and Mercy could be in nothing extended and manifested more effectually than for God to become Man; and for the redress of Mans irreparable Misery, to render himself miserable. Again, God as he is Merciful, so is he Just; The Justice of God called for Satisfaction, condign Satisfaction for Mans injustice done by Sin, But (alas) worthless Man could (as is said before) make no such Satisfaction, therefore God becoming Man, and Dying for Man, made Satisfaction in the utmost rigor of Justice for the Sin of Man. Moreover the End and Happiness of Man (as hath been often said) is the Fruition of God an infinite Good; but Man was destitute of proper Self Merit, and means whereby to attain to this inestimable End, (as hath been likewise said and proved) therefore God becoming Man, merited and purchas'd, for Man, what before so infinitely transcended his Reach. The second Evidence or Motive of Credibility, is taken from the Stupendious Miracles done by Christ whilst on Earth, to prove himself to be God, and his Doctrine or Gospel Suprem and Divine; Miracles infinitely above the compass of any created Strength or Industry, and only Commensurate to a Divine Power; As are raising the Dead to Life, healing the Lame, giving Sight to the Blind, curing the Sick of naturally incurable Distempers, and all these suddenly, and by his sole Touch, Word, or Command; As likewise are, Casting out of Devils Aswaging Tempests, Walking upon the Sea, as upon Dry Land, Feeding to Overplus Five Thousand Persons, with Five Loaves of Bread, &c. As also are Manifestations of the Secret of Mens Hearts; a Knowledge of all things both present and distant, both past and to come. Miracles done in the Presence, some of Thousands, some of Hundreds, and all of a sufficient Number of Eye-Witnesses; Miracles undeniable by his then extent most malicious Adversaries; Miracles universally attested, and the Memory of them perpetuated by the unanimous harmony of Persons and Records of all Ages. These Miracles, I say, are superabundant Evidences and Motives of Credibility, that Christ
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our Saviour is God, and his Doctrine or Gospel Divine. The Third rational evidence of motive or Credibility, is taken from the wonderful Propagation of the Gospel of Christ. None who judge by Reason, or even common Sense, can imagine, That a few in number, and those poor illiterate and despicable Persons, (as were all the Apostles and Disciples of Christ, sent and Commission'd by him to Preach his Gospel) delivering a Doctrine not only above the reach of natural Science, or Knowledge, but repugnant and destructive to the Maxims of the World, and Blandishments of the Flesh, should nevertheless contrary to all Temporal or Carnal Interest, superiour to all Human difficulties, and invincible to all Oppositions, spread and dilate this Doctrin throughout the World, and transmit it indelible to all future Ages. None, I say, of common Reason or Sense, can imagin such a Doctrine, so deliver'd and propagated, could have any other than God for the Author. The fourth and last rational evidence or motive of Credibility, is taken from the Purity, Sanctity, and Rectitude of manners contain'd in the Principles, and relucient in the Practise of the true Christian Religion, and remonstrating the same to be no less than Divine. We find Man's contaminated Nature transported and hurry'd with a strange deluge, and impetuosity to Vice and Sin, to Pride and Self-conceit, to Avarice, to Lust, to Intemperance, to Rage, to Fraud, to Malice, to Injustice, and all kind of Immorality : Which contamination of Nature receives no small addition from the Temptations and Allurements of the World. It was therefore highly necessary, there should be an Antidot to the Poison, healing Remedies to the Distempers, and a Medicinal Law to repress the Misdemeanors, and rectify the Disorders of deprav'd Nature : It was necessary, I say, there should be apply'd to our Pride and Self-conceit, Humility and Submission ; to our Avarice, Poverty of Spirit ; to our Lust, Continency and Chastity ; to our Intemperance, Fasting and Abstinence ; to our Rage and Passion, Meekness and Patience ; to our Fraud, Sincerity ; to our Malice, Charity ; to our Injustice, Righteousness ; and to the Temptation of the World, a Contempt and Disregard of it in what it Alienates the Heart from God its Creator : That thus Man from Vicious, might become Vertuous ; his Soul adorn'd and perfected with Holiness of Life ; his corrupt Nature reclaim'd, and himself led, as it were, by Manuduction to his last end. These are the blessed fruits and effects, springing from Gospel Dictates, which if impartially consider'd, give a Moral assurance they flow from a Divine Fountain and Original. It may be Objected, There are Multitudes

titudes of Persons believing and professing Christianity, upon whose Lives and Manners these Gospel dictates, work no such effects, as are here mention'd. It is answer'd; there are indeed too too many Professors of Christianity, whose wicked Practises are little answerable to the Purity and Sanctity taught and known in the Gospel Dictates; however this Wickedness of Manners proceeds not from any deficiency in the Dictates, but from a delinquency in the Professors, which Professors therefore may fitly be stiled, as to point of Practise, no Christians.

My last conclusive Position is, There is necessary to Salvation, as it imports Remission of Sin and Fruition of God, a Faith in Christ, as the indispensable Condition, or means introductive and Applicative of his Merits and Mercies to Man. To prove my position, I argue thus; Upon the Reception of a Benefit *Gratis*, and [by Benevolence bestowed on a Rational Creature; the very Law of Nature dictates there is required and due, an Owning or Acknowledgment to be made of the Benefit; Yes, and a Love to be render'd by the Receiver to the Benefactor. But it is impossible, such an Acknowledgment shou'd be made, or Love render'd, without a previous Knowledge of the Benefit received; For no Man can either Acknowledg, or Love he knows not what, consequently seeing the Remission of Sin and Fruition of God, are, (as hath been proved in the first and second position) Benefits purely *Gratis*, and by Benevolence bestowed by God on Man, there is indispensably requir'd and due to God, from Man, a reciprocal and grateful Acknowledgment of, and love for these precious Benefits. But this Acknowledgement can never be made, nor love render'd without a Knowledge of the Truths and Mysteries including the Benefits. And this Knowledge can never be attain'd by natural Science, but only by Faith. For Faith is defin'd to be a Knowledge of certain Truths or Mysteries divinely reveal'd, relating to Mans Salvation, and assented to because so reveal'd, tho' not demonstrable by deduction, from natural Causes and Effects. Thus then Faith is indispensably necessary to Salvation. Hence this main Article, concerning the necessity of Faith, hath been constantly Preached, Divulged, and received in all Ages and Places, when, or where soever the name of Christian hath gained admittance. And all the Arguments and Motives of Credibility brought in the fifth Position, to prove the Doctrine or Gospel of Christ to be True and Divine, prove also this Article of the necessity of Faith to be True and Divine, as being an Essential Part of the same Doctrin or Gospel.

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Having thus given a distinct Proof to each particular Clause, or matter contain'd in the general Assertion (*viz.*) That Salvation, as it imports Remission of Sin, and fruition of God is not due to Man, nor attainable by him, otherwise than by a Faith in one Mediator Christ Jesus; and that therefore there actually is such a Mediator, and such a Faith: I shall now make a distinct Answer to diverse particular Objections implicitly included in your general Query. And first it is Objected, God has indu'd Man with Reason, on account of which, Man is said to be a rational Creature, and therefore it is contradictory to his very Nature, to give an Assent, or Belief to the truth of any Proposition (such as is every Article of Faith) transcendant to his Reason; for this would be for Man to develt himself of his Nature. It is Answer'd, If by the word *Reason* be meant that rational Power or Faculty in the Soul, term'd the Understanding, by which Man comprehends the truth or falsity of a thing: It is indeed contradictory to Man's Nature to give an assent without such a faculty, to any Proposition; For this would be to understand without an understanding. But if by the word *Reason*, be meant a rational Evidence, Cause or Motive of Credibility, why a Man gives an assent to the truth of any Proposition; It is not contradictory, but most agreeable and consonant to Man's Nature, to give an assent upon such rational Motives to any Proposition.

Secondly, It is Objected, When God Created Man, he gave him a faculty of Reason, whereby to arrive to the knowledge of his Creator, by the footsteps of Nature, and imprinted in his Soul a Law of Morality, whereby to distinguish Good from Evil. Now it seems proposterous, and destructive to the establish'd order and frame of Nature, That God should institute a new Law, and require from Man a belief of it, and submission to it. The truth of which nevertheless transcends the ability of human Reason, tracing the footsteps of Nature to comprehend. It is answer'd, Man may arrive to the knowledge of a truth by two ways. The one is by an intrinick demonstration from Natural causes to their effects; and this knowledge is term'd natural Science: The other is by an extrinick Manifestation, or Revelation of a Proponent, or Attestant, and herein the assurance of such a knowledge of truth, is proportion'd to the Credit and Authority of the Proponent; And in short, if God, who is truth it self, manifests and reveals a truth, the knowledge and assurance of such a truth, is superiour to all human or natural Science: This knowledge is what we term Faith. Nor is this knowledge of God, and his Law, arriving to Man by Revelation, any wise proposterous or destructive to the know-
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ledg we have of him, and his Law, drawn from the footsteps and impressions of Nature; but rather a supply to the deficiency of such natural knowledg; for God is immense, and his ways inscrutable, and none can by inferences and consequences drawn from the Principles of Nature, comprehend the total, either of what God is, or what he may require of us: Indeed, seing the bounties and benefits conferr'd by God on his Creatures, are the meer effects of his own free-will, the very freedom and liberty of his Will in conferring, or not conferring these bounties and benefits, implies an impossibility of attaining to the knowledg of them, before, or otherwise, then as he freely pleases to reveal and manifest them; And as it is the height of Blasphemy to say, God within the verge of Nature has done so much, he cannot do more; so is it the height of Arrogance (after he hath reveal'd and manifested the effects of his Will above the verge of Nature) to affirm he hath not done more. Thirdly, It is Objected, That the rational dences and Motives of Credibility, specify'd in the fifth Position, tho' they afford a Moral certainty of the truths reveal'd by Christ, yet not amounting to a scientific Demonstration, they seem disproportionable, and insufficient to cause or produce that assurance of assent challeng'd by Faith: It is Answer'd, The specify'd Motives of Credibility, are only the instrumental causes productive of Faith, (as tools in the hands of the Artificer) But the efficient cause producing an assurance of Assent to Divine Revelations or matters of Faith, is the veracity of God the Revealer, into which veracity, Faith (as the effect into its adequat cause) is finally resolv'd and terminated. Fourthly, It is Objected, An exclusion of an Innocent from the Fruition of God, his final end and happiness, is a Punishment inflicted without a fault, and a cruelty incompatible with Divine Justice. It is Answer'd, An Exclusion of Man however innocent and inculpable from the Fruition of God, an happiness which neither by the right of Nature was due to him, nor which by any merit of his he could ever deserve, cannot be term'd or esteem'd a Punishment at all, either for, or without a fault, much less a cruelty incompatible with Divine Justice; for every Punishment is properly a subtraction of a benefit or happiness from a culpable or guilty person; to which happiness the guilty person before his guilt had some just propriety and right, and which right he justly forfeited by his guilt. Now an Exclusion of Man from the Fruition of God, is no such thing, but only a pure Negation, or Non-conferring of a free gift or benovolence, to which Man however suppos'd innocent, neither has, nor ever could, have, any just propriety or right; (as hath been more at large already prov'd in the second Position) wherfore God may without any pre-supposition of Fault

on Man's part, or imputation of cruelty and injustice on God's part, exclude Man from the fruition of himself, as a benefit or happiness to which Man has no imaginable just Title or Claim; Nevertheless it may be granted, that a Person Innocent and free from Sin (if any such had been) would not be liable to the horrid tortures, torments and flames, inflicted by the Judgment and Vengeance of God, on wilful and malicious Sinners, for those alone are justly Condemned to the utmost Extremity, of an unhappy and miserable Being, who to Sin have abandoned God, the sole Fountain of well-Being. And in this sense, it is most true, that regarding the above named Torments and their Cause, there is none punishable who is not culpable. Fifthly, it is objected, to what purpose, and with what appearance of Justice, has God in so many Ages, Created and fixed in the World so many Persons, who yet he knew neither would nor could ever attain to their natural End, and final Happiness? Were it not better such Persons never had been? It is answered, (over and above what hath been already sufficiently said, and proved concerning this matter) A Being even in a condemned Sinner, is preferable to no Being, as far as his Being is the work of his Creator, for it is simply better to be something than nothing; but the dismal Miseries and Torments attending the Sinner and annex'd to his Crime are no positive Being, but a privation of well-Being, The sole effect and product of Malice and Sin. And as to the purpose or design God has in the Creation of Man, whether Good or Evil; It is for the Manifestation of his Sovereignty and Glory of his Attributes; He bestows upon some, Blessings Temporal and Eternal, for the Manifestation of his Mercy; He inflicts upon others Punishments Temporal and Eternal for the Manifestation of his Justice; He grants to some, the Fruition of himself, a Benefit above what they deserve; He excludes others from the same Fruition, a Benefit they do not deserve; Thus, he is Good to all, but unjust to none; he extends or limits the effects of his mercy and goodness, according to the measure of his own Will, but still without injustice to any: To illustrate this point, God might, if he would; have Created thousands of Worlds besides this, and in each World millions of Men; but he has not done it; must we then say, This possible Mass of Worlds and Men, may justly accuse God of Partiality and Injustice, in giving to this single World an actual Being, and leaving all the rest in the Abiss of their own Nothing? Certainly No. And as God the Sovereign Lord hath amongst his Works on Earth, made some irrational Creatures, as Stones, Plants, Brutes, without dignifying of them (as he hath Man) with the noble faculties of Will and Reason; because it so pleased him; yet without any

injustice to the irrational Creatures themselves ; for the same Sovereign Lord hath amongst the number of Mankind, in all Ages, destin'd and elected, some to the everlasting fruition of himself, an happiness they could not justly demand ; And excluded others from the same fruition an happiness they could not justly require ; And this God, the Just, the Good, Will, because he Will ; and to conclude, It is true, God cannot Will, but what is Just and Good ; but it is likewise true, what he Will is therefore Just and Good, because he Will ; for the Will of God is the Supream and Unaccountable Rule both of Justice and Goodness.

You add in the close of your Query, That what you said of an Unbeliever may proportionably be adapted to an erroneous Believer ; and you are in the right ; for no Faith, and a false Faith, are equally Pernicious ; the reason is, because Faith applicative of Christ's Merits to Man's Justification, takes not its vertue and efficacy from the force or strength of Perswasion in the Believer, but from the worth and value of the Misteries believ'd ; so that when Faith is not uniform, and correlative to the integrity of its Object, being all, and every reveal'd Mystery, each of which is influential to Justification, such a Faith looseth its applicative Property, and becomes abortive, fruitless, and delusory.

Thus, I hope, I have given you satisfaction to each particular Clause contain'd in your general Query : Now I wish the effect may correspond to the good Intention herein of

S I R,

Your well-meaning Friend
and Servant,

J. C.

